What is claimed is:

1.   A method of verifying the authenticity of goods, comprising the steps of:

generating one or more random codes;

storing the one or more random codes in a database;

marking one or more goods with one of the one or more random codes such that each of the one or more goods have their own unique random code; and

inspecting an inventory of marked goods to thereby verify the authenticity of goods or identify counterfeit goods.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more codes are a subset of a total number of possible codes and wherein the total number of possible codes is substantially larger than the subset.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of marking one or more products comprises affixing a tag or label containing one random code to each of the one or more goods.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of inspecting the inventory of marked goods comprises reading the one or more random codes with a scanner.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of inspecting the inventory of marked goods further comprises comparing codes on the one or more goods to codes within the database to verify the authenticity of goods or identify counterfeit goods.

6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the step of comparing the codes to codes within the database further comprises the steps of:

verifying whether the codes on the one or more goods are valid random codes;

checking whether the codes on the one or more goods have already been used; and

providing an indication of whether the goods are authentic or not.

7.   The method of claim 6, wherein providing an indication of whether the goods are authentic comprises indicating whether the codes on the one or more goods are valid and if valid, indicating whether the codes have previously been used.

8.   The method of claim 6, wherein the step of checking whether the codes on the one or more goods has already been used further comprises the steps of:

comparing a valid random code to a follow-up file containing other valid random codes which have already been used to determine whether the valid random codes has been used; and

updating the follow-up file with the valid random code if the valid random code has not been used.

9.   The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more random codes are each unique.

10.   A system for verifying the authenticity of goods, comprising:

a database containing a plurality of unique random codes and an indication whether each of the plurality of unique random codes has been read;

a code reader for reading a code on a good; and

comparing means for comparing a read code to the plurality of unique random codes in the database, wherein the comparing means is operable to indicate whether the read code is valid and if valid, whether it has been read previously on another good.

11.   The system of claim 10, further comprising a computer for generating the plurality of unique random codes.

12.   The system of claim 11, wherein the computer further includes a memory for containing each of the generated random codes, and wherein the computer compares each generated random code to those within the memory and discarding any generated code that is a duplicate, thereby ensuring that each generated code is unique.

13.   The system of claim 11, further comprising a printer electrically connected to the computer, wherein the printer is operable to print the plurality of unique random codes on a tag, label or directly on the good to be marked.

14.   The system of claim 13, wherein the printer is operable to print each generated code and its corresponding bar code equivalent, to thereby aid in the subsequent reading of the code.

15.   The system of claim 10, wherein the code reader is a scanner.

16.   A method of preventing a diversion of goods from a desired channel or channels of distribution, comprising the steps of:

generating a combination code, wherein a portion of the combination code is a random code and the other portion is a non-random code;

encrypting the combination code, wherein an encryption key used to perform the encryption of the combination code is unique to the desired channel or channels of distribution;

applying the encrypted combination code to the goods; and

verifying whether an encryption key used for encrypting the combination codes on the inspected goods within the desired channel or channels of distribution matches the encryption key which is uniquely dedicated for the desired channel or channels of distribution, thereby identifying whether a diversion of goods has occurred.

17.   The method of claim 16, wherein the step of verifying further comprises:

inspecting the goods within the desired channel or channels of distribution;

decrypting the codes on the goods with a decryption key; and

examining the decrypted codes, thereby determining whether a diversion of goods has occurred.

18.   The method of claim 17, wherein examining the decrypted codes comprises comparing the decrypted codes to the non-random portion of the combination codes, wherein a match indicates no diversion of goods.

19,   The method of claim 16, further comprising the step generating a pair of encryption keys, wherein one key is used to encrypt combination codes and the other is used to decrypt the codes within the desired channel or channels of distribution.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of providing a manufacturer with the encryption key to encrypt combination codes.

21. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of placing the goods into commerce after the encrypted combination codes have been applied to the goods.

22. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of inspecting the goods comprises reading the codes on the goods with a scanner.

23. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of examining the decrypted codes comprises visually examining the codes for the expected non-random portion of the combination codes.

24. A method of verifying the authenticity of goods, comprising the steps of:

generating one or more combination codes, wherein each combination code has a random portion and a non-random portion;

encrypting the one or more combination codes;

applying the encrypted combination codes to one or more goods, wherein each of the goods has a unique encrypted combination code; and

examining goods to verify whether they are authentic.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the step of generating one or more combination codes comprises the steps of:

generating one or more random codes; and

combining the one or more random codes with a non-random code.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein combining the one or more random codes with a non-random code is selected from the group consisting of concatenating the non-random code to an end of the random code, concatenating the non-random code to a beginning of the random code and interposing the non-random code within the random code.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein the step of examining goods further comprises the steps of:

decrypting a code on each of the goods; and

determining whether the goods are authentic based on the decrypted code.

28. The method of claim 24, wherein the step of examining the goods comprises the steps of:

reading a code from one of the one or more goods;

decrypting the code; and

determining whether the decrypted code contains the non-random portion of the combination codes.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the step of reading the code comprises scanning the code.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the step of determining whether the decrypted code contains the non-random portion comprises visually inspecting the decrypted code.

31. The method of claim 24, wherein the step of examining the goods comprises:

reading a code from one of the one or more goods;

decrypting the code; and

comparing the decrypted code to the non-random portion of the combination codes.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of determining whether the combination code has been previously used if the non-random portion matches a portion of the decrypted code.

33. A system for preventing a diversion of goods from a desired channel or channels of distribution, comprising:

means for generating a combination code, wherein a portion of the combination code is a random code and the other portion is a non-random code;

means for encrypting the combination code, wherein an encryption key used to perform the encryption of the combination code is unique to the desired channel or channels of distribution;

means for applying the encrypted combination code to the goods; and

means for verifying whether an encryption key used for encrypting the combination codes on the inspected goods within the desired channel or channels of distribution matches the encryption key which is uniquely dedicated for the desired channel or channels of distribution, thereby identifying whether a diversion of goods has occurred.

34. A method of verifying authenticity or other information of goods or the like using an encrypted code, comprising determining whether an encrypted code is present, determining whether the code when decrypted matches a prescribed code, and determining whether the matched prescribed code is a duplicate.

35. A method of verifying authenticity or other information of goods or the like, comprising, using an encrypted code, comprising determining whether an encrypted code is present, determining whether the code when decrypted matches a prescribed code, determining whether the matched prescribed code is a duplicate, and if a duplicate, then indicating that at least one or the other of the goods is a counterfeit.

36. A method of coded labeling of goods, process or the like, comprising obtaining a random number, alphanumeric or the like code and a further non-random string, alphanumeric, or the like code; coupling the codes to obtain a combination code with a random portion and a non-random label portion; encrypting the combination code; applying or associating the encrypted combination code to or associating it with goods, process or the like; and verifying authenticity of the goods, process or the like or of some characteristic thereof by decrypting that which was encrypted and determining whether the non-random label portion is found and/or is correct.

37. A method of using coded information, comprising obtaining a random code intended to be coupled with a further non-random code, obtaining a non-random code including at least a secret portion that is encrypted to be readable (decrypted properly) only by use of a private key, combining the non-random code with the random code to obtain a combination code; encrypting the combination code; applying the encrypted combination code or associating it with an object, item, good, program, etc.; and verifying authenticity of the object, etc. or of some characteristic of the object, etc. by decrypting that which was encrypted, including decrypting the secret portion by a private key.

38. The method of claim 37, said decrypting including decrypting the combination code using a public key and subsequently decrypting the secret portion using a private key.

39. A method of tracking or like function using in a non-random portion of a combination code a secret encrypted portion containing the tracking or like function information, comprising forming a combination code, encrypting the combination code, and applying the encrypted combination code to goods or the like.

40. The method of claim 39, further comprising and applying the encrypted combination code to goods or the like; and subsequently decrypting the combination code and then the secret portion of the combination code to determine the tracking or the like information.

41. A method of obtaining information concerning goods or the like, such as whether a tax has been paid properly, including creating a supply of encrypted combination codes, supplying those encrypted combination codes to an entity for application to goods or the like or for association with goods or the like, decrypting the combination code using a public key, and determining whether the information concerning the goods or the like, such as the payment of a tax, has been made properly.

42. The method of claim 41, further comprising destroying the codes after use.

43. The method of claim 41, further comprising destroying or confiscating the goods if not proper or passing the goods, e.g., into commerce, if proper.

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